

Bishops revel in Archbishop O'Brien's installation

Cardinal J. Francis Stafford made a stop in Emmitsburg before he attended Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien's Oct. 1 installation ceremony at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland. There, he prayed for the new Baltimore archbishop at the tombs of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Archbishop James R. Bayley – two New York natives who served in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"Archbishop O'Brien is, of course, a New Yorker, and I prayed that they would intercede for his ministry," said Cardinal Stafford, a former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore who now serves as head of the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary.

"I asked all the previous archbishops that they might pray for this man and the enormous challenge that he will face in these crucial times," Cardinal Stafford said. "It's a great challenge to give witness to the truth of the Gospel. Our Catholic people need the goodness of their spiritual leader to show them the way."

The Baltimore native said Archbishop O'Brien's installation homily represented a "courageous proclamation of the truth and the beauty of the goodness of the Christian message."

After the celebration, many of the prelates reflected on the significance of the historic occasion and praised Archbishop O'Brien as a man of great vision.

"It's a great beginning for what I'm sure will be a great pastor for the Archdiocese of Baltimore," said Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington. "I think he's going to love the people and that's the most important gift you can have."

Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, retired archbishop of Philadelphia, called the ceremony "beautiful."

"He's a very kind man and he'll make a very good shepherd," said Cardinal Bevilacqua. "He'll be a good administrator. He'll be close to the priests. He'll be close to the people and to the religious."

Most importantly, Cardinal Bevilacqua said, Archbishop O'Brien will be a "happy man. And he's going to make the people happy."

Bishop William C. Newman, retired eastern vicar, said he was "very happy" to see that the new Baltimore archbishop seems to have a deep appreciation for the historical nature of the archdiocese. He was impressed that Archbishop O'Brien embraced the commitments to social justice of Cardinal Lawrence Shehan, the collegiality of Archbishop William D. Borders and the interfaith outreach of Cardinal William H. Keeler.

"He has an understanding of the past and he's establishing himself by trying to continue their very good ministry here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore," Bishop Newman said.